

BURGLARY FOR LOVE

Girl Who Intended to Steal Mortgage Papers Gets Husband Instead.

By GRACE KERRIGAN.

For a fortnight or more the family had been worried over Ethel Barrie. There was father, mother and little Bob—little, but having a wise head on his shoulders.

"She doesn't sing or whistle any more," said the father.

"And she's quite lost her appetite," added the mother.

"And when any of her fellers drop in she gives 'em the skate in ten minutes," announced Bob.

"May be coming down with an illness."

"I thing she's worrying over something."

"I have asked her, and she says no."

"Maybe the kissing-bug has come back and hasn't kissed her!" put in Bob.

"Well, if she doesn't shirk up soon we'll speak to the doctor about it," said the father as he picked up his paper and began reading.

"Bob," said the mother, "have you seen Ethel crying?"

"Nope."

"Do you hear her tossing around in her bed at night?"

"Not a toss."

"Haven't you asked her if she was in trouble?"

"Yep, and she said if I read any more of her love letters she'd break my infernal neck. If she's committed murder or anything she ain't going to give it away."

While this conversation was being held within the house, Miss Ethel and a girl friend were approaching it along the street and speaking in whispers, although it would have been safe enough to use the ordinary tones. Clapsed tightly under Miss Ethel's arm was a good sized bundle.

"I'll bet you back out!" whispered the other girl.

"No, I shan't. I'm scared, but I shall go through with it."

"But if you are arrested?"

"Heavens, don't speak of it."

"Better give it up."

"But I can't. I've said I would do it. Here we are at the steps. Oh, I hope I can get in and upstairs all right. Now go away on tiptoe."

The front door was opened an inch at a time, the hall stairs mounted as softly as a cat, and Miss Ethel found herself in her room and her entrance undetected.

Seven or eight blocks distant from the Barrie house lived the widow Lee. She was not only a widow, but poor and hardworking. She had lost her husband and son in the same week. There had been nothing but ill-luck for her, and just at this time the climax seemed at hand. She had given a mortgage on her home and was behind with interest and principal. The girl was at the house when the money-lender called and said he should begin foreclosure proceedings after another week. The widow was sick in bed, penniless, and would have been without food except for what the girl brought her. The cottage must go.

"But it shan't!" said Miss Ethel.

"My dear girl, there is no other way. You have got money from your father and used it for me, but he can't take up the mortgage. Perhaps there are men that would, but who is to find them? If I can get strong again I can get along all right."

"I'll go to Mr. Foster and appeal to him for more time."

"To be laughed at. He's a hard old man. If he gave me over a year more what good would it do?"

"But I shall do something," the sympathetic girl replied, and even before she left the house she began planning.

Few persons knew anything about the old man Foster except that he was a Shylock, living in a tumble-

down shanty by himself. Some persons said he had a nephew to whom he was going to leave everything, and others that he hadn't a relative in the world. He was hooted at and hated, and only those driven to the wall for want of money ever went near him. It was such a man that Miss Ethel set out to plan against, taking into her confidence only a girl friend as ignorant of law and human nature as she was herself.

"If I get down on my knees to him—if I plead with tears in my eyes, his heart must melt," mused the girl as she went over her plans.

But suppose that failed? The girl friend and the widow were sure it would.

Miss Ethel had been told that a mortgage was some sort of a legal paper that must be signed by the person who got the money. If she could get that paper away from old Foster and into the hands of the widow, then he might whistle for his money.

Would the appeal, no matter how tearful it was, secure her the desired document? Was she strong enough to wrest it from the old man? Her brother Bob, out playing shindy at the moment, could have given her advice on that point. But brother Bob was not asked for his legal opinion. Instead of that, his sister went to the wise Miss Solomon, of whom she had made a confidant.

"There is only one way," replied the girl. "If you want that paper you must steal it."

"Why—why—"

"You must enter the house as a burglar and take it from his desk."

"Gracious me!"

"You must go by night."

"I can't!"

"You must go in disguise."

"Never!"

"You must be disguised as a boy. I can get you a suit of brother Sam's clothes for you."

"We'll give up the idea right now! I never could do those things."

"Easiest thing in the world. They say the old man sleeps like a log, and that a child can climb into his windows. You carry a candle with you, and you light it so as to find the desk. In three minutes you have the paper, and half an hour later the widow has it and you have saved her home. Talk about knight-errands, but you'll surely be one!"

"But suppose the old man wakes up?" asked Miss Ethel.

"You can't go to supposing in such a case. If he wakes up tell him you are in the wrong house by mistake—tell him most anything you think of. Dear me, what a romantic adventure!"

It took the sympathizer with a widow's troubles three long days and nights to make up her mind to do the foolish thing, and then not until the hair had walked past old Foster's shanty half a dozen times and assured themselves that it would be an easy job. They also heard the grocer on the corner say that the old man was sick abed. This would make it all the easier, as his stinginess might be depended on to keep the house clear of nurse and doctor.

A darkish night, a boy skulking along the streets, a human heart choking a human being, and a human being's knees wobbling and his teeth chattering. If little Bob Barrie had been there to see and know he would have cried out:

"You are a born fool, sister, but you've got more grit than a sand pile!"

Twice the boy passed the shanty. No light! No one moving! A window conveniently raised! He trembled and shook, but he climbed in. His toes had just touched the floor when a hand gripped the back of his neck and a voice spoke in his ear:

"Make a move to get away and you are a dead man. I have been watching you for the last ten minutes."

And then a match was scratched and a candle lit. It was a young man who had the disguised Miss Ethel in a grip of steel. She shrank away with an arm up, but he quietly said:

"Take that chair there. You came here to rob!"

"I—I wanted a paper," stammered the girl.

"What sort of a paper?"

"A—A mortgage."

The young man was not fooled by her disguise. No sooner had he seen her by candle light than he knew her sex. That handsome, although perturbed face could not belong to a criminal. It was a daring thing for her to do, but he suspected there was a bad adviser behind it.

"Tell me all about it," he kindly said.

With tears and sighs and sobs and blushes the girl related her story, and for half a minute after she had concluded there was no word from the man. Neither did he look at her.

"I was his nephew," he finally said.

"Yes, he was a hard man on his debtors, but the world had wronged and soured him. He died at three o'clock this afternoon."

"What—dead!" exclaimed the girl.

He took up the light and signed for her to follow and entered the next room and pointed to the coffin. Then he led her to the outer door and said:

"He left all to me. Tell the widow not to worry. I will send her a release of mortgage. You will understand why I cannot see you home. Good night."

It was a thankful girl who reached her home and her room undetected, and she felt that she never could be grateful enough for the young man's consideration.

They met again six weeks later at the widow's, when he brought the papers that made the cottage her home, but it was more than a year before Bob Brodie had the felicitation of bragging to a playmate:

"Your sister ain't agoin' to be married next week, but mine is, and it's to a coker of a man who can buy two tame elephants if he wants to!"

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His Very Latest.

Jones had come home very late one night after a convivial evening at a smoking concert, and had consumed more cigars and refreshments than was good for him. It was midnight when Jones reached home, but he did not know it.

"Ah!" he muttered, "if the church clock would only strike I should know the time. It's too dark to see."

Just as he spoke the clock began to strike. Breathlessly Jones counted.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve." But at that moment another clock began: "Thirteen," counted Jones, "fourteen, fifteen (Great Scott!), sixteen, seventeen, eighteen (gracious!), nineteen, twenty (!!), twenty-one, twenty-two (!!), twenty-three (mercy on us!), twenty-four."

Mopping his steaming brow, he exclaimed:

"My word, I've never been so late in my life!"

Powerful Support.

Upton Sinclair, at a vegetarian reunion, attacked bitterly a malefactor of great wealth.

"And yet this man," said a vegetarian, "claims that when he embarked on a business career, he took for his motto, 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' Ho! ha! ha!"

"Well," said Mr. Sinclair, "there's nothing like having good backing."

The Gift-Horse Idea.

Wiseman—I see a dentist says a man intending matrimony should look carefully at the teeth of the young woman selected.

Cynicus—No doubt a scientific conclusion. But it will not appeal to the foreigner of title in search of American money.—Judge.

Getting There.

The fellow who gets there doesn't depend so much on inspiration as on perspiration.—Philadelphia Record.

There is nothing mean in a woman's makeup. After a man has apologized for something he didn't do she will always admit that she was wrong.

IS DONE WITH EUROPE

CAPITALIST TELLS WHY HE PREFERS "GOD'S OWN COUNTRY."

Something of a Moral in This Story of a Modern Promoter Who Was Asked Questions That Seemed Impertinent.

The capitalist, as the customs officer rummaged in his steamer trunk, chewed the end of his cigar viciously.

"Well, anyhow," he said, "I'm glad to be back in God's own country again."

"How did you make out, cap, with that scheme of yours ever there?" a financial editor asked.

The capitalist turned a deep red. He swelled and stiffened. He seemed to burst.

"Blankety blank blank!" he roared. "Asterisks and dashes! Wait till I tell you!"

"I put up in Paris at the Bristol in the Place Vendome—the hotel of kings, you know—and I spent money regardless in making my scheme known. I announced a capitalization of a hundred million francs—that's twenty millions in our money."

"Well, the government got after me. They asked me the most ridiculous and impudent questions about assets and all that. They actually wanted me to show that I had a business and a plant and a stock the full value of capitalization!"

The capitalist was seized with another spasm of profanity. "Blankety blank blank! Blankety."

"Do you know what the law is in France?" he shouted. "Why, in France, you can't capitalize a concern for more than it's worth. Not a penny more than it's worth. So, of course, my scheme fell through. Watering stocks is forbidden by law over there. Did you ever hear of such a thing? Why, the organizers of our steel trusts and railroad mergers and so forth would be, if they lived in France—"

He laughed with bitterness and scorn.

"If they lived in France, they'd all be in jail!"

He took a deep breath. He now seemed a little calmer.

"So here I am," he said, "back in in God's own country again. Back in the land of the free. Here, thank goodness, we haven't got a meddling, interfering government butting in on our private affairs insisting that the public must have solid value for every share of stock bought, the same as if it was buying a house or a suit of clothes. Rank paternalism—that's what I call it. And we want none of it here."

"No, siree! We want none of it in God's own country," the capitalist ended. "And now I'll bid you good day. Did I tell you I had an option on the Oil City and the Carbondale for two million apiece? I expect to merge 'em—total cost four millions—and then to capitalize 'em for thirty million. Twenty-six millions of profit. How is that?"—Los Angeles Times.

Glad It Was Over.

Prime Minister Khreddine passing on horseback once through Tunis, an Arab rushed to him, stopped the horse and clamored for justice. Amused, the minister listened and said: "Thy case is a well known one; I have studied it thoroughly and since thou wantest it to be decided at once, I decide, as in duty bound, against thee." Kneeling, the man kissed the hand of Khreddine. "Thou hast misunderstood me," said the minister. "I have pronounced against thee." "I have understood thee very well," said the man, "but I am full of gratitude, now it is finished."

Easy Escapes.

Hereafter any reputable citizen of St. Louis, Mo., who has had the foresight to provide himself with an identification card will escape being locked in a cell on any misdemeanor charge.